

March 1, 2010

To: Members of the CT. Public Health Committee:

From: Mary Jane Pych, Director of East Windsor Family Resource Center

**RE: RAISED BILL NO. 5306 – An Act Concerning the Operation of Child Day Care Centers and Group Day Care Home in Public Schools**

I am writing this letter in support of an **exemption** from the Department of Public Health's physical plant regulatory requirements to child day care centers and group day care homes that operate in public school buildings and exclusively serve school-age children.

As the Director of the East Windsor Family Resource Center (FRC) which runs both the Before School and After School Programs at Broad Brook Elementary School, one of my highest priorities is to make sure the children are in a safe and healthy environment. Our program is exempt from licensing because the East Windsor Board of Education actually oversees the program for the FRC, and we are in operation from 7 AM to 6 PM each day as we also provide an Extended Day Program for the kindergarteners and PreK students that attend this public elementary school. Even though we do not have to follow the required DPH regulations since we are exempt, we still try to as much as possible. The regulations concerning the school's physical environment (both inside and outside) are the ones that I feel are the most difficult to meet in order to be licensed by the DPH. School buildings are often old (Broad Brook Elementary School was built in 1950) and may not be able to meet all the DPH's physical plant requirements. Our FRC and BOE do not have the extra monies that would be needed to make the necessary changes to get licensed. This would definitely put an interruption in our school-age childcare services that we presently provide to our families in the East Windsor community. One of the advantages of our program to the parents is the fact that their children can remain in the school building for their after school childcare. Our parents like the fact that they know where their children are from the time they drop them off in the morning until it is time to pick them up. It would be quite wonderful if the BOE and town had the funds to build a new elementary school, but right now the children remain in this older building. The school system and custodians keep the school environment safe and clean during the school hours, and consequently, this same building remains as safe and clean during before and after school hours. We are able to utilize several rooms, cafeteria and gym during after school hours.

If I did not feel our school building was safe, I would not be the Director of this program that provides the important and needed school-age childcare beyond the normal school hours so that parents know their children are in a safe and nurturing environment. **If a school is safe for the youth from 9 AM to 3:30 PM each school day, then it is safe enough from 7 AM to 9 AM and from 3:30 PM to 6 PM.** Thank you for taking the time to read my testimony.